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To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a financial assistance program to facilitate the provision of supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

NOVEMBER 10, 2005

Mr. BURR introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs

A BILL

To amend title 38, United States Code, to establish a financial assistance program to facilitate the provision of supportive services for very low-income veteran families in permanent housing, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR SUPPORTIVE**
4 **SERVICES FOR VERY LOW-INCOME VETERAN**
5 **FAMILIES IN PERMANENT HOUSING.**

6 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
7 “Services To Prevent Veterans Homelessness Act”.

1 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to facili-
 2 tate the provision of supportive services for very low-in-
 3 come veteran families in permanent housing.

4 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter V of chapter 20
 6 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by add-
 7 ing at the end the following new subchapter:

8 **“§ 2044. Financial assistance for supportive services**
 9 **for very low-income veteran families in**
 10 **permanent housing**

11 “(a) DISTRIBUTION OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

12 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide
 13 financial assistance to eligible entities approved
 14 under this section to provide and coordinate the pro-
 15 vision of supportive services described in subsection
 16 (b) for very low-income veteran families occupying
 17 permanent housing.

18 “(2) PER DIEM PAYMENTS.—Financial assist-
 19 ance under this section shall consist of per diem
 20 payments for each such family for which an ap-
 21 proved eligible entity is providing or coordinating the
 22 provision of supportive services.

23 “(3) FORMULA.—The Secretary shall establish
 24 a formula to determine the rate of per diem pay-
 25 ments to be provided with respect to very low-income

1 veteran families provided supportive services under
2 this section. This rate shall be adjusted not less than
3 annually to reflect changes in the cost of living. In
4 calculating the per diem formula under this para-
5 graph, the Secretary may consider geographic cost
6 of living variances, family size, and the cost of serv-
7 ices provided.

8 “(4) PREFERENCE.—In providing financial as-
9 sistance under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall
10 give preference to entities providing or coordinating
11 the provision of supportive services for very low-in-
12 come veteran families who are transitioning from
13 homelessness to permanent housing.

14 “(5) GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION.—The Sec-
15 retary shall ensure that, to the extent practicable, fi-
16 nancial assistance under this subsection is equitably
17 distributed across geographic regions, including
18 rural communities and tribal lands.

19 “(6) NOTICE.—Each entity receiving financial
20 assistance under this section to provide supportive
21 services to a very low-income veteran family shall
22 notify that family that such services are being paid
23 for, in whole or in part, by the Department of Vet-
24 erans Affairs.

1 “(7) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—The Sec-
2 retary may require entities receiving financial assist-
3 ance under this section to submit a report to the
4 Secretary that describes the projects carried out
5 with such financial assistance.

6 “(b) SUPPORTIVE SERVICES.—The supportive serv-
7 ices referred to in subsection (a) are the following:

8 “(1) Services provided by an eligible entity or
9 subcontractors that address the needs of very low-in-
10 come veteran families occupying permanent housing,
11 including—

12 “(A) outreach services;

13 “(B) health care services, including diag-
14 nosis, treatment, and counseling for mental
15 health and substance abuse disorders and for
16 post-traumatic stress disorder, if such services
17 are not readily available through the Depart-
18 ment of Veterans Affairs medical center serving
19 the geographic area in which the veteran family
20 is housed;

21 “(C) habilitation and rehabilitation serv-
22 ices;

23 “(D) case management services;

24 “(E) daily living services;

25 “(F) personal financial planning;

1 “(G) transportation services;

2 “(H) vocational counseling;

3 “(I) employment and training;

4 “(J) educational services;

5 “(K) assistance in obtaining veterans bene-
6 fits and other public benefits, including health
7 care provided by the Department;

8 “(L) assistance in obtaining income sup-
9 port;

10 “(M) assistance in obtaining health insur-
11 ance;

12 “(N) fiduciary and representative payee
13 services;

14 “(O) legal services to assist the veteran
15 family with reconsiderations or appeals of vet-
16 erans and public benefit claim denials and to
17 resolve outstanding warrants that interfere with
18 the family’s ability to obtain or retain housing
19 or supportive services;

20 “(P) child care;

21 “(Q) housing counseling;

22 “(R) other services necessary for maintain-
23 ing independent living; and

24 “(S) coordination of services under this
25 paragraph.

1 “(2) Services described in paragraph (1) that
2 are delivered to very low-income veteran families
3 who are homeless and who are scheduled to become
4 residents of permanent housing within 90 days
5 pending the location or development of housing suit-
6 able for permanent housing.

7 “(3) Services described in paragraph (1) for
8 very low-income veteran families who have volun-
9 tarily chosen to seek other housing after a period of
10 tenancy in permanent housing, that are provided, for
11 a period of 90 days after such families exit perma-
12 nent housing or until such families commence re-
13 ceipt of other housing services adequate to meet
14 their current needs, but only to the extent that serv-
15 ices under this paragraph are designed to support
16 such families in their choice to transition into hous-
17 ing that is responsive to their individual needs and
18 preferences.

19 “(c) APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.—

20 “(1) IN GENERAL.—An eligible entity seeking
21 financial assistance under subsection (a) shall sub-
22 mit an application to the Secretary in such form, in
23 such manner, and containing such commitments and
24 information as the Secretary determines to be nec-
25 essary to carry out this section.

1 “(2) CONTENTS.—Each application submitted
2 by an eligible entity under paragraph (1) shall con-
3 tain—

4 “(A) a description of the supportive serv-
5 ices proposed to be provided by the eligible enti-
6 ty;

7 “(B) a description of the types of very low-
8 income veteran families proposed to be provided
9 such services;

10 “(C) an estimate of the number of very
11 low-income veteran families proposed to be pro-
12 vided such services;

13 “(D) evidence of the experience of the eli-
14 gible entity in providing supportive services to
15 very low-income veteran families;

16 “(E) a description of the managerial ca-
17 pacity of the eligible entity to—

18 “(i) coordinate the provision of sup-
19 portive services with the provision of per-
20 manent housing, by the eligible entity or
21 by other organizations;

22 “(ii) continuously assess the needs of
23 very low-income veteran families for sup-
24 portive services;

1 “(iii) coordinate the provision of sup-
 2 portive services with the services of the De-
 3 partment;

4 “(iv) tailor supportive services to the
 5 needs of very low-income veteran families;
 6 and

7 “(v) continuously seek new sources of
 8 assistance to ensure the long-term provi-
 9 sion of supportive services to very low-in-
 10 come veteran families.

11 “(3) SELECTION CRITERIA.—The Secretary
 12 shall establish criteria for the selection of eligible en-
 13 tities to be provided financial assistance under this
 14 section.

15 “(d) TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.—

16 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide
 17 training and technical assistance to participating eli-
 18 gible entities regarding the planning, development,
 19 and provision of supportive services to very low-in-
 20 come veteran families occupying permanent housing.

21 “(2) CONTRACTS.—The Secretary may provide
 22 the training described in paragraph (1) directly or
 23 through grants or contracts with appropriate public
 24 or nonprofit private entities.

1 “(e) FUNDING.—Of the amounts available each fiscal
 2 year to the Department for Medical Care for veterans,
 3 \$25,000,000 shall be available in each such fiscal year to
 4 carry out the provisions of this section, of which not more
 5 than \$750,000 may be used to provide technical assistance
 6 under subsection (d).

7 “(f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

8 “(1) CONSUMER COOPERATIVE.—The term
 9 ‘consumer cooperative’ has the meaning given such
 10 term in section 202 of the Housing Act of 1959 (12
 11 U.S.C. 1701q).

12 “(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term ‘eligible en-
 13 tity’ means—

14 “(A) a private nonprofit organization; or

15 “(B) a consumer cooperative.

16 “(3) HOMELESS.—The term ‘homeless’ has the
 17 meaning given the term in section 103 of the
 18 McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42
 19 U.S.C. 11302)).

20 “(4) PERMANENT HOUSING.—The term ‘perma-
 21 nent housing’ means community-based housing with-
 22 out a designated length of stay.

23 “(5) PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—
 24 The term ‘private nonprofit organization’ means—

1 “(A) any incorporated private institution
2 or foundation—

3 “(i) no part of the net earnings of
4 which inures to the benefit of any member,
5 founder, contributor, or individual;

6 “(ii) which has a governing board that
7 is responsible for the operation of the sup-
8 portive services provided under this sec-
9 tion; and

10 “(iii) which is approved by the Sec-
11 retary as to financial responsibility;

12 “(B) a for-profit limited partnership, the
13 sole general partner of which is an organization
14 meeting the requirements of clauses (i), (ii),
15 and (iii) of subparagraph (A);

16 “(C) a corporation wholly owned and con-
17 trolled by an organization meeting the require-
18 ments of clauses (i), (ii), and (iii) of subpara-
19 graph (A); and

20 “(D) a tribally designated housing entity
21 (as defined in section 4 of the Native American
22 Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act
23 of 1996 (25 U.S.C. 4103)).

24 “(6) VERY LOW-INCOME VETERAN FAMILY.—

1 “(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subpara-
2 graphs (B) and (C), the term ‘very low-income
3 veteran family’ means a veteran family whose
4 income does not exceed 50 percent of the me-
5 dian income for the area, as determined by the
6 Secretary in accordance with this paragraph.

7 “(B) ADJUSTMENTS FOR FAMILY SIZE.—
8 The Secretary shall make appropriate adjust-
9 ments to the income requirement under sub-
10 paragraph (A) based on family size.

11 “(C) ADJUSTMENTS FOR HOUSING
12 COSTS.—The Secretary may establish an in-
13 come ceiling higher or lower than 50 percent of
14 the median income for an area if the Secretary
15 determines that such variations are necessary
16 because the area has unusually high or low con-
17 struction costs, fair market rents (as deter-
18 mined under section 8 of the United States
19 Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437f)), or
20 family incomes.

21 “(7) VETERAN FAMILY.—The term ‘veteran
22 family’ includes a veteran who is a single person and
23 a family in which the head of household or the
24 spouse of the head of household is a veteran.”.

1 (2) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sec-
2 tion at the beginning of chapter 20 of title 38,
3 United States Code, is amended by inserting after
4 the item relating to section 2043 the following:

“2044. Financial assistance for supportive services for very low-income veteran
families in permanent housing.”.

